

## Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 024330  
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSM-05  
SIG-02 MMO-04 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-10  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 /115 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH  
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN  
S/PRS - MR. BROWN (INFO)  
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)  
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW  
NEA - MS. GRIFFIN  
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER  
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

-----031624Z 040264 /46

O 031526Z FEB 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 024330

USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 024330

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL; CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - FEBRUARY 2

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 2, 1977:

Q. THERE WAS A STORY FROM BEIRUT THIS MORNING SAYING THAT THE AMERICAN CHARGE HAD PROPOSED TO THE LEBANESE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD SET UP AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM ON ITS BORDER WITH ISRAEL IN RETURN FOR CERTAIN AGREEMENTS BY LEBANON. CAN YOU DISCUSS THIS MEETING WITH US? I MEAN, HAS THE UNITED STATES, IN EFFECT, MADE SUCH A PROPOSAL?

A. I CANNOT CONTRIBUTE MUCH TO THAT OTHER THAN TO REPEAT WHAT I HAVE SAID BEFORE, NAMELY THAT WE REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH THE CONCERNED PARTIES. I REALLY AM NOT IN A POSITION  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 024330

TO GIVE YOU ANY DETAILS ON THE CONVERSATIONS.

Q. BUT ISN'T THIS RATHER EXTRAORDINARY? I MEAN, WHEN THE UNITED STATES GOT INVOLVED IN EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL, THAT WAS RATHER WELL-KNOWN AND PUBLICIZED AT THE TIME. THIS LOOKS LIKE AN AMERICAN POSSIBLE INVITATION TO BECOME INVOLVED.

A. NO, I DON'T READ IT AS THAT, AND I CANNOT OFFER YOU ANYTHING MORE THAN I HAVE IN THE PAST ABOUT THE FACILITATIVE ROLE THAT WE ARE PLAYING IN MAKING THE VIEWS OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED KNOWN TO EACH OTHER AND TRYING TO HELP, AS WE ARE ABLE.

Q. HAS CONGRESS BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THIS? I MEAN, IF THE STORY IS TRUE, IT IS AN EXTRAORDINARY PROPOSAL.

A. IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY "THIS"? THERE IS A CONSTANT FLOW OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

Q. THIS STORY IS RATHER SPECIFIC. IT SAYS THE UNITED STATES PROPOSED SETTING UP AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM IN LEBANON TO TELL ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE ISRAELI CROSSING OF THE BORDER, AND IN RETURN FOR LEBANON TO GIVE INFORMATION

ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS SOUTH, OBVIOUSLY TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. IF THE STORY IS TRUE, THIS WOULD INVOLVE AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL, PRESUMABLY, TO HAVE AMERICAN TECHNICIANS, OR SOMETHING, INSIDE OF LEBANON.

A. I THINK THAT IS CARRYING IT BEYOND THE CONTENTS OF THE STORY, AS I READ IT IN ANY EVENT. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER YOU ANY ENLIGHTENMENT OF WHAT IS BEING SAID ON THE SUBJECT OTHER THAN WHAT WE HAVE OFFERED IN THE PAST.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 024330

Q. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS RATHER ANNOYING TO HAVE TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LEBANON AND READ IT IN "AN NAHAR" EVERY DAY.

A. YES.

Q. I WISH WE COULD GET SOME--I MEAN, YOU HAVE SKIRTED THIS ISSUE NOW CONSTANTLY--AND I THINK YOU SHOULD REALLY OWE IT TO US TO AT LEAST GIVE US SOME MORE DETAILS ON WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING?

A. O.K. I TAKE YOUR POINT, AND I UNDERSTAND IT, BUT I REALLY DON'T THINK WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO OFFER YOU DETAILS OF WHAT IS BEING DISCUSSED, PROPOSED, OR EVEN BEING THOUGHT ABOUT. IT IS SIMPLY NOT A WAY TO CONDUCT DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS. I DON'T WISH TO SEEM EVASIVE ON THE SUBJECT, BUT IT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO OFFER YOU ANY KIND OF ELUCIDATION OR EXPANSION ON WHAT IS BEING TALKED ABOUT.

Q. FRANKLY, I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN POSSIBLY AVOID IT, BECAUSE THERE ARE TWO FACTORS INVOLVED. IF THE DISCUSSION IS SIMPLY ABOUT A DIPLOMATIC EARLY-WARNING, IN EFFECT, THAT THERE WOULD BE CONTACT OVER POSSIBLE ADVANCE WARNING OF ANY MOVEMENT ACROSS THE BORDER, THAT IS ONE THING, WHICH WILL CERTAINLY BE INTERESTING ENOUGH IN ITSELF. IF THERE IS ANY DISCUSSION HERE OF ACTUALLY SETTING UP ANY KIND OF A MONITORING SYSTEM PHYSICALLY, I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN POSSIBLY ESCAPE IT. IT IS A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY. AND TO ASK US TO DESIST FROM QUESTIONING YOU ABOUT IT, IS JUST ASKING FOR NIRVANA.

A. I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO DESIST FROM QUESTIONING; YOU ARE WELCOME TO QUESTION. I AM JUST NOT GOING INTO ANY KIND OF DISCUSSION ON IT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON IT,  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 024330

IN THE FIRST PLACE.

Q. CAN YOU TAKE THE SPECIFIC QUESTION: HAS THE UNITED STATES SUGGESTED TO LEBANON, TRA-LA, WHATEVER THE ORIGINAL REPORT WAS -- CAN YOU TAKE A QUESTION ON THE SUBJECT, HAVE WE PROPOSED AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM?

A. NOT ON TRA-LA, TRA-LA. WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

Q. ACCORDING TO "AN NAHAR" -- I BELIEVE IT IS AN AP STORY -- IS THE AN NAHAR REPORT SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT AND IF SO--

A. IS IT CORRECT IN ANY RESPECT?

Q. CAN YOU TAKE THE QUESTION? CAN YOU ENDEAVOR TO GET US AN ANSWER ON THE ACCURACY OF THIS NEWSPAPER REPORT?

A. YES, I WILL ENDEAVOR TO. JUST TO COME BACK TO IT, THERE IS A GOOD BIT, I BELIEVE, THAT WAS SAID IN THE AP REPORT, AND SIMPLY TO GIVE YOU A BLANKET ANSWER ONE WAY OR THE OTHER WOULD BE RATHER DIFFICULT, BUT I WILL TRY TO GET YOU SOME KIND OF ANSWER ON IT.

Q. WELL, THE SPECIFIC POINT THAT WAS AT ISSUE HERE, WAS THE UNITED STATES UNDERTAKING TO GET INVOLVED IN AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM?

A. THE QUESTION IS INVOLVEMENT IN AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM. I WILL TRY TO GET YOU AN ANSWER ON THAT.

Q. I DON'T LIKE TO PRESENT ANOTHER ONE THAT YOU WILL HAVE

TO SKIRT--AND I WILL TRY TO PHRASE THIS VERY CAREFULLY: I WAS WONDERING IF ANY OF THE ARAB EMBASSIES HERE IN WASHINGTON HAVE EXPRESSED ANY CONCERN, AS HAVE A GREAT UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 024330

MANY ARAB-AMERICANS, ABOUT THE HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL'S REFERENCE TO "DIRTY ARABS," A "DIRTY ARAB"? HAVE ANY OF THE EMBASSIES--? IN OTHER WORDS, ARE WE TO PRESUME THAT ALL THE ARAB EMBASSIES THAT ARE HERE IN WASHINGTON HAVE SAID NOTHING, EXPRESSED NO CONCERN, DON'T CARE WHEN ALL THE ARAB-AMERICANS ARE JUSTIFIABLY ENRAGED AT THIS?

A. I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH EXPRESSION.

Q. KNOWLEDGE? IN OTHER WORDS, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS HAD NO IDEA THAT THE ARAB EMBASSIES ARE AT ALL CONCERNED ABOUT IT, IS THAT IT?

A. I SAID, I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH EXPRESSION.

Q. YOU HAVE NONE, I SEE. ALL RIGHT.

Q. TO GO BACK TO THE MEETING BETWEEN SARKIS AND HAFIZ ASAD--LEAVING ASIDE THE LEBANESE NEWSPAPERS, CBS SAID, QUITE SIMPLY, THAT THEY WERE MEETING TO DISCUSS IDEAS, HOW TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. ARE YOU SAYING THAT OUR ROLE IS LIMITED TO POINTING OUT OUR CONCERN, OR TO GO BACK ONE ADMINISTRATION, ARE WE ACTING AS A CATALYST, OFFERING PROPOSALS, IDEAS, AND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION?

A. WE ARE MAKING SURE THAT ALL PARTIES UNDERSTAND THE VIEWS OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN THE SITUATION.

Q. THAT I UNDERSTAND.

A. WE ARE TRYING TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN THIS RESPECT, AND WE ARE URGING RESTRAINT.

Q. WELL, IN PLAYING A HELPFUL ROLE, ARE YOU OFFERING ANYTHING CONCRETE, APART FROM YOUR CONCERN ABOUT UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 024330

TENSIONS IN THE AREA?

A. I'M SORRY, I CAN'T GO INTO ANY FURTHER ELUCIDATION OF OUR DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

Q. I WAS NOT ASKING ABOUT A SPECIFIC IDEA LIKE AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM, I JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF THE UNITED STATES INPUT IS ANYTHING MORE THAN EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN BETWEEN THE PARTIES, OR ARE YOU OFFERING ANY IDEAS AS TO

HOW TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I THINK IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS IT WOULD BE CORRECT TO ASSUME THAT IDEAS ARE OFFERED, BECAUSE THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR ATTEMPT TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE, AND CERTAINLY IDEAS ON HOW TO ACT WOULD BE PART OF THAT. I THINK THAT ALMOST GOES WITHOUT SAYING.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN AT THE FEBRUARY 2 PRESS BRIEFING:

Q. HAS THE UNITED STATES UNDERTAKEN TO GET INVOLVED IN AN EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. --IT IS UNTRUE THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS PROPOSED AN

"EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM," OR HAS PLANS FOR SUCH A SYSTEM, OR HAS UNDERTAKEN TO BECOME INVOLVED IN SUCH A SYSTEM IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

--WE REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH THOSE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, TO MAKE CERTAIN EACH UNDERSTANDS THE POSITION OF THE OTHERS ABOUT THIS SENSITIVE AREA. OUR AIM IS TO HELP FIND WAYS, IF POSSIBLE, TO  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 024330

AVOID CONFRONTATIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WHICH COULD CREATE NEW TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. FYI--THE FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO THE SPOKESMAN PRIOR TO THE ABOVE NOON BRIEFING: (BUT WAS NOT USED):

Q. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT LIBYA BEING AMONG "U.S. ENEMIES," ACCORDING TO DOD?

A. THE TERM "ENEMY LIST" IS THE TERM COINED BY THE PRESS, NOT BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THE NEWS ARTICLES (STAR, IHT) SEEM TO BE BASED ON A LINE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN SUPPORT OF ITS BUDGET REQUEST. THAT LINE SAYS THAT LIBYA MAY "CHOOSE TO CHALLENGE U.S. INTERESTS AND FRIENDS." AS THE WASHINGTON PRESS REPORT INDICATED, LIBYA IS NOT INCLUDED AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE TRADING WITH THE ENEMY ACT, AND, IN FACT, WE HAVE ACTIVE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH LIBYA. IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PENTAGON REPORT, PLEASE GO TO THEM FOR THE ANSWERS.  
VANCE

UNCLASSIFIED

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INSTRUCTIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 03-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977STATE024330  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770039-0194  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t197702100/baaaeven.tel  
**Line Count:** 309  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 714b1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ORIGIN NEA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3233252  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - FEBRUARY 2  
**TAGS:** PFOR, XF  
**To:** BEIRUT DAMASCUS MULTIPLE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/714b1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009